

Madeira

December 20, 2024

Steve & Robin

Blandy's Duke of Clarence Madeira	\$19.99
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Sandeman Rainwater Madeira	\$20.99
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Sandeman Fine Rich Madeira	\$20.99
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Broadbent Madeira Reserve 5 yr	\$27.99
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Cossart Gordon Bual Madeira 5 yr	\$28.99
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Miles 10 yr Rich Madeira	\$35.90
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Madeira Tasting Notes

Madeira

The Portuguese island of Madeira, which lies in the Atlantic Ocean, 480 miles southwest of Lisbon, was an important refuelling port for passing ships on the trade routes of old. Madeira wines were taken on board as victuals and brandy was added to each barrel of wine to improve its keeping qualities during the long sea voyages. The heat of the ship's hold was found to have dramatically improved the wines, making them richer and more complex, as well as making them stable and capable of ageing almost indefinitely.

In the 18th century winemakers experimented with replicating this process on land. Initially they simply used the heat of the sun to warm up the barrels. This is known as the Canteiro process and it is still used. Today, after fortification with 96% grape spirit, the wines are left in casks of varying sizes normally 300 - 650 litres, in lodges where the temperature can reach over 30°C and the humidity can be as high as 90%. During the process around 4 - 5% is lost by evaporation.

Later special 'ovens' or estufas were created to heat up the barrels of wine. The estufa process has been modified in recent years. The wines are now kept in containers, mainly of stainless steel, which are heated by 'jackets' containing hot water. This enables the wine to be maintained at the required temperature of 45 °C - 50 °C for a period of three months. Modern estufas can be large, ranging from 20,000 - 100,000 litres. After heating, the wines are allowed to cool down gradually.

After the Canteiro or estufa process the wines are carefully tested for quality and potential for further ageing. The length of time a wine is left to age is a decision based on quality and the style of wine required. The wine is aged in old wooden barrels and then offered as a 3, 5, 10 or 15-year-old wine, with the very best being offered as vintage Madeira after a minimum of 20 years' cask ageing.

Madeira wines are without doubt the longest lasting quality wines produced. A vintage Madeira can last for a century or more, and then once opened the wine can be enjoyed, re-stoppered and stored for months without deterioration.

Madeira Types

3, 5, 10 and 15-year-old

These are the most readily available wines, the label shows the age of the youngest constituent. Mainly produced in the estufa system. If the wine is made from one of the first four classic grape varieties mentioned above this will be stated on the label. If no grape variety is stated, the wine will be made mainly from the widely grown red tinta negra grape and the wine will be labelled with the level of sweetness.

Single harvest

First offered by The Madeira Wine Company, a wine labelled 'single harvest' is a wine from a single vintage that has had five to ten years' cask ageing in the Canteiro system. It cannot be labelled as a 'vintage' wine as it has not had enough cask ageing.

Colheita

A single-vintage wine that has had approx 12-18 years in cask, ageing in the Canteiro system, bottled off as a single vintage probably because the blender has considered that more cask ageing (up to 20 years minimum) will not improve it enough to make a top-quality vintage wine.

Vintage

The top-quality Madeiras produced. A single vintage wine that has had at least 20 years' cask ageing, in many instances up to 40 years or more, in the Canteiro system. These wines are increasingly rare but are outstanding examples of wines that can last a lifetime and beyond and still remain remarkably fresh and appealing when eventually opened. These wines share a characteristic nuttiness, with hints of caramel, toffee, marmalade and raisins. All this complexity and depth of flavour is underpinned by a bright, crisp acidity which prevents the wines from being cloying and leaves the palate feeling refreshed.

More at <https://www.thewinesociety.com/discover/explore/regional-guides/madeira-ultimate-guide/>

The Wines

Sandeman Rainwater Madeira

Medium light amber colour with pronounced golden highlights. Clean nutty aromas, light complexity and very agreeable. Brilliant wine - a good quality young Madeira in evolution. Medium flavour, nutty and slightly complex, with a good clean finish. The character of Sandeman Rainwater Madeira make it a perfect match for many appetisers, such as soups, bisques, foie gras or pate. It is also a respected ingredient in classic high quality cuisine and adds a unique touch of flavour to any dish. Once open Sandeman Rainwater Madeira can remain fresh for up to 4 - 8 weeks.

Made from the Tinta Negra grape variety, it boasts a distinctive amber color with golden hues, presenting a rich aroma of nuts, caramel, and dried fruits. On the palate, it delivers a harmonious blend of sweetness and acidity, with flavors of toasted almonds and hints of orange peel.

Waves of tangy orange peel and marmalade mingle with the warmth of caramelized brown sugar. The finish is a harmonious blend of tropical fruit notes and a lingering suggestion of salted toffee, leaving a memorable and delightful imprint on the senses.

Blandy's Duke of Clarence Madeira

Blandy's Duke of Clarence is a 3 year old rich style of Madeira produced using Tinta Negra, the islands only red grape variety. It is golden brown in colour and has fabulous aromas of honey and raisins. It is the perfect after dinner drink or pairs well with cake in the afternoon!

Lovely after-dinner drink with aromas of fruitcake, figs, prunes and plums. Finishes with a salted toffee note. This wine is made from the volcanic, sub-tropical Portuguese island of Madeira, 400 miles of the northwest African coast. The Blandy's have owned this winery since 1811. Pair with toasted nuts and hard cheeses.

Madeira food pairings: fruit cakes, soft cheeses, puddings.

Deep golden brown colour with honey and raisins on the nose and a full-bodied and softly textured palate. A great after-dinner drink. It is a superb accompaniment to dessert dishes, especially fruits, cakes, chocolate puddings and soft cheeses. It will keep for several months after opening.

Sandeman Fine Rich Madeira

A dark amber wine with golden highlights. Rich aromas of dried fruits showing a pleasantly light complexity. Rich and smooth flavour with light acidity and a good finish. Brilliant wine - a good quality young Madeira in evolution.

Broadbent Madeira Reserve 5 Year

Straightforward flavors of molasses, orange and toffee, modest concentration and medium body, with a touch of heat on the lingering finish. Drink now.

Aged in oak casks for at least 5 years. This is clearly a different style of Madeira: sweet, yes, but with nearly a vintage Madeira level of acid and complexity. With its dark gold color and sweet, nutty aromas, this is on the rich side of the Madeira taste spectrum. It has attractive fruitiness and aged citrus acidity that go together, leaving a wine that is both sweet but also fresh.

Color: Excellent deep amber color. Aroma: Dry fruits on the nose. Elegant. Palate: Rich, soft and balanced, with some complexity. A long and pleasant mellowed finish, with bittersweet chocolate notes. Serving: Excellent with desserts, cheeses and a splendid after dinner drink. Grape varieties: Negra Mole, Complexa, Tinta de Madeira and Triunfo.

Cossart Gordon Bual Madeira 5 Year

Cossart Gordon 5 year old Bual was aged in American oak casks in the traditional 'Canteiro' system. This comprises of the gentle heating of the wine in the lofts of the lodges in Funchal. Over the years the wine is transferred from the top floors to the middle floors and eventually to the ground floor where it is cooler. After this gradual 'estufagem' the wine underwent racking and fining before the blend was assembled and bottled.

Clear, amber colour with tinges of gold; a bouquet of dried fruit, vanilla, wood and toffee with a smooth, medium-sweet finish and an excellent balance between the fruit and acidity.

Cossart Gordon 5 year old Bual is fined and does not require decanting. It is excellent as an after dinner drink and also very good with fruit, milk chocolate, cakes and hard cheeses. It has been bottled when ready for drinking and will keep for several months after opening

Miles 10 Year Rich Madeira

Colour: deep chestnut with golden highlights. Nose: characteristic Madeira bouquet of dried fruits, spices, honey and candied fruit. Palate: sweet, soft and complex, with a long aftertaste of roasted dried fruits.

Miles Madeira 10yr Dry is a sophisticated and well-aged fortified wine from the island of Madeira, Portugal. This dry Madeira offers complex flavors of toasted nuts, dried fruits, and a hint of spice, with a rich, nutty finish that lingers on the palate. The wine's balanced acidity and smooth texture make it an

excellent choice as an aperitif or paired with savory dishes like aged cheeses, nuts, or pâté. Miles' long history and expertise in Madeira winemaking are evident in the depth and elegance of this 10-year-old Dry Madeira